



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **House National Security Committee**

### **Floyd D. Spence, Chairman**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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#### **CHAIRMAN FLOYD SPENCE (R-SC) REMARKS UPON THE ENROLLMENT OF THE FISCAL YEAR 1999 DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATIONS BILLS**

"I am very please to be a part of this enrollment ceremony recognizing the completion of the defense authorization and appropriations conference reports. These two reports represent about half the federal budget in terms of spending, and they reflect months of oversight, and both were completed before the end of the fiscal year. On the substance, however, there is not a lot of 'good news' to report.

"Within the past two weeks, even the President has taken the long overdue step of publicly admitting to what we have all known for years – the nation's military is facing serious readiness problems and funding shortfalls that will require increased spending. While the Administration would have us believe these problems are new, they are not. According to the Joint Chiefs, the services face a \$70-\$80 billion shortfall over the next five years – and this doesn't include the tens of billions of dollars necessary to close the pay gap and fix the retirement system. Five year shortfalls of this magnitude don't just happen overnight; it takes years of downsizing, overextending and underfunding the force to create problems like this.

"Over the last four years, and in a bipartisan fashion, Congress has been trying to address some of these shortfalls as best we can:

- We have legislated improvements in the flawed readiness reporting system, culminating in the complete revamping of the reporting system in this year's authorization conference report.
- Despite repeated presidential veto threats for spending too much money on defense, the National Security Committee has nonetheless added more than \$4.5 billion to the President's budget requests in several key readiness accounts over the past four years.
- Congress has approved more than \$12 billion in supplemental appropriations since 1993 to cover the underfunded (even unbudgeted) costs of the Administration's often controversial peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

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“Even after all we have done many problem remain. The services are struggling with their fiscal year 2000-2004 budgets as we speak. The quality of life, readiness and modernization shortfalls being confronted by the military are as ‘serious as a heart attack’ and just as lethal. The President will have every opportunity to lead in the months ahead by increasing his own defense budget to address the significant shortfalls identified by the nation’s senior military leadership.

“While the President’s words will hopefully help to build a broader based awareness among the American people of this problem, I hope the President’s actions in the months ahead will speak louder than his words.”

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